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MULTICULTURALISM

"Celebrate our differences"



Honourable David M. Collenette
Minister of State
Multiculturalism

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Multiculturalisme

Canada



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IN THE BEGINNING...

"In (the new) Parliament there will be no question of race, nationality, religion or locality... The basis of action adopted by the delegates to the Quebec Conference in preparing the resolutions, was to do justice to all — justice to all races, to all religions, to all nationalities and to all interests..."

(Hector L. Langevin — 1865)

IN THE SIXTIES...

"What better way could we prepare for our centenary than by taking effective steps now to deepen and strengthen the reality and the hopes of Confederation so that all Canadians, without regard to race or language or cultural background may feel with confidence that within this nation they can realize, without discrimination and in full partnership, a good destiny for themselves and for those who follow them."

(Lester Pearson — 1962)

IN THE SEVENTIES...

"A policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework commends itself to the Government as the most suitable means of assuring the cultural freedom of Canadians... A vigorous policy of multiculturalism will help form... the base of a society which is based on fair play for all."

(Pierre E. Trudeau — 1971)

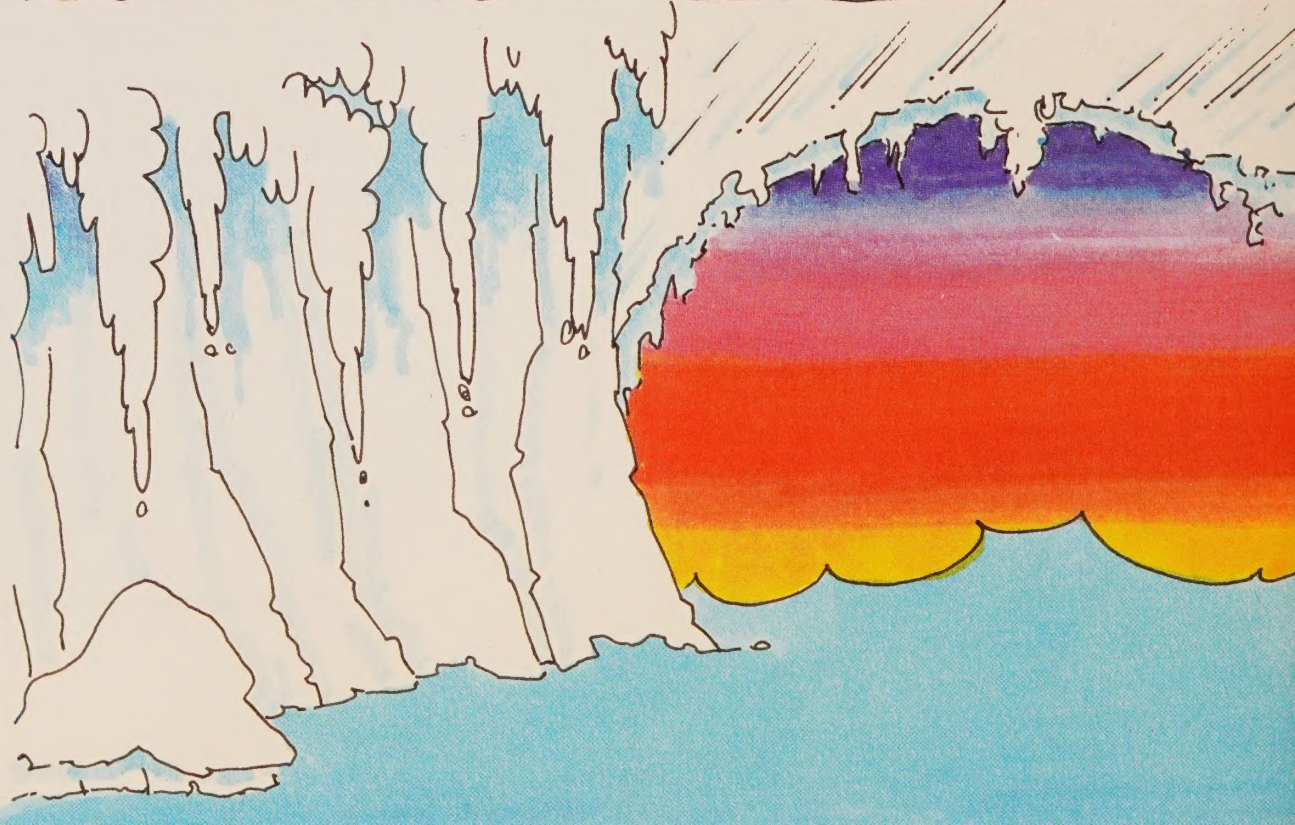
INTRODUCTION

This booklet outlines the historical and cultural development of Canada by briefly describing the many different ethnocultural groups that have come to Canada and have contributed greatly to this country's economic and cultural maturity.

In putting this story together, we have skipped rapidly through hundreds of years of our history. We began with the prehistoric arrival of the antecedents of our Native peoples, proceeded to the period of European discovery and exploration, the subsequent colonisation and settlement by the French and the English, the railway, the inevitable political union, modern immigration and ended with the cultural mosaic of present-day Canada.

We hope that the following will make the reader more aware of Canada's historical and cultural evolution, and of the federal government's multiculturalism policy which recognizes and encourages the contributions made to Canadian society by its ethnocultural groups.

Although most believe that Christopher Columbus discovered Canada and the rest of North America, it has been proven that people were here centuries before he landed in 1492. These people, the ancestors of the Inuit and the Amerindian arrived in prehistoric times. Just when they came is not certain. It is believed that during the last Great Ice Age they travelled across a natural land bridge created by the ice covering Bering Strait.

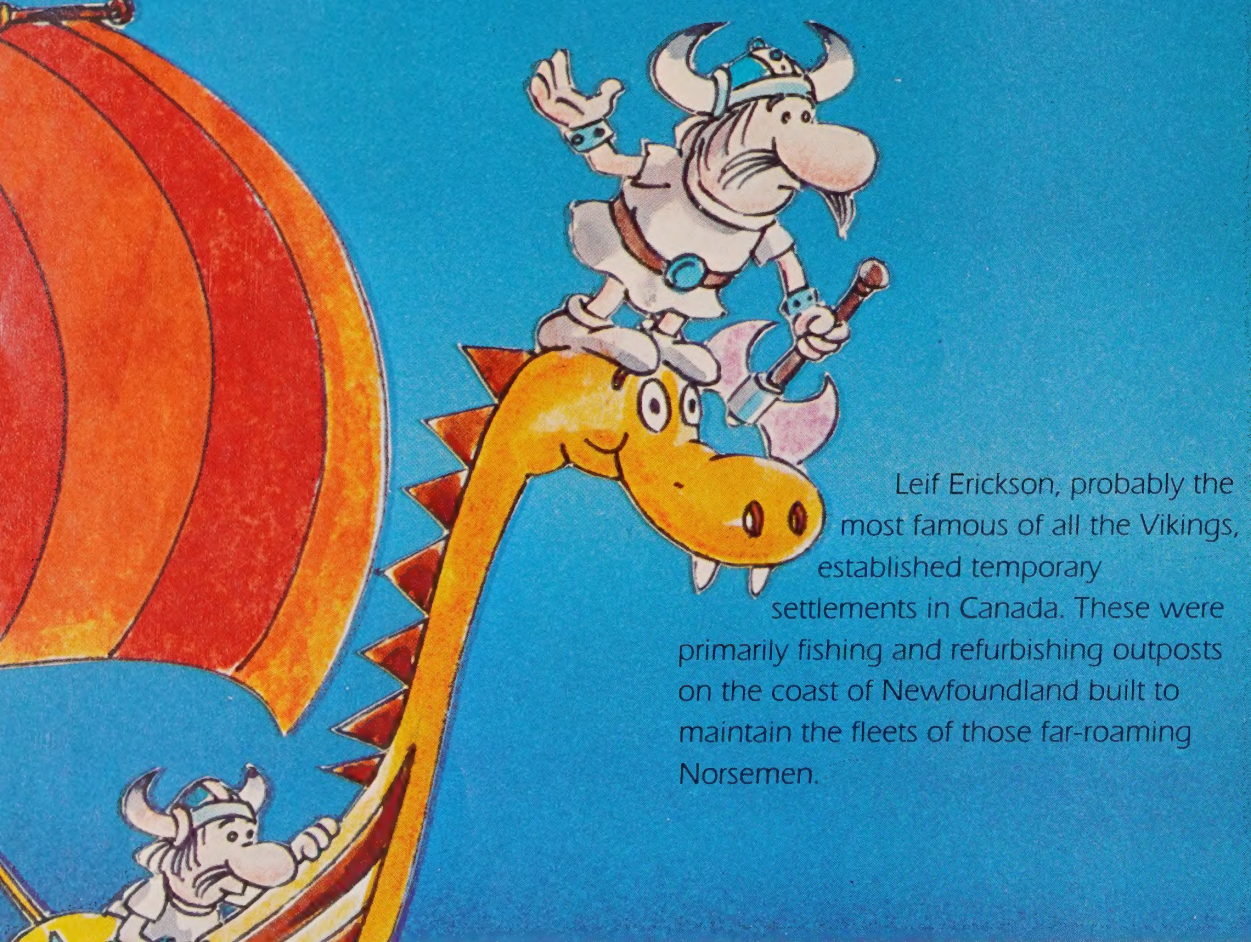




By the time the polar ice cap receded and the continent had thawed out, these people were established in various groups across the length and breadth of the country. For centuries they lived off the bounty of the land and the sea. Their rough but simple life was in harmony with nature and the environment.

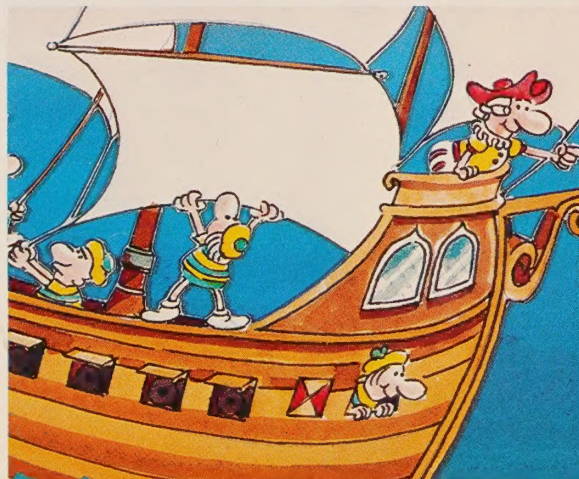
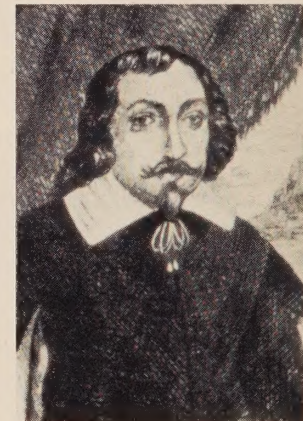
Life remained relatively unchanged for Canada's first arrivals with no known or documented visits from anyone outside this continent. Then about the year 1000, a group of sea-faring Norsemen came ashore on the north-eastern coast of Newfoundland.





Leif Erickson, probably the most famous of all the Vikings, established temporary settlements in Canada. These were primarily fishing and refurbishing outposts on the coast of Newfoundland built to maintain the fleets of those far-roaming Norsemen.

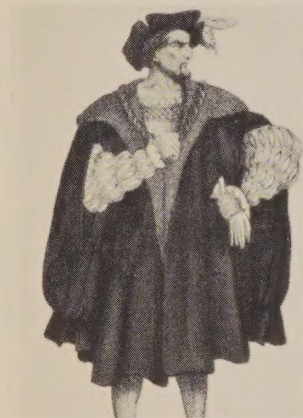
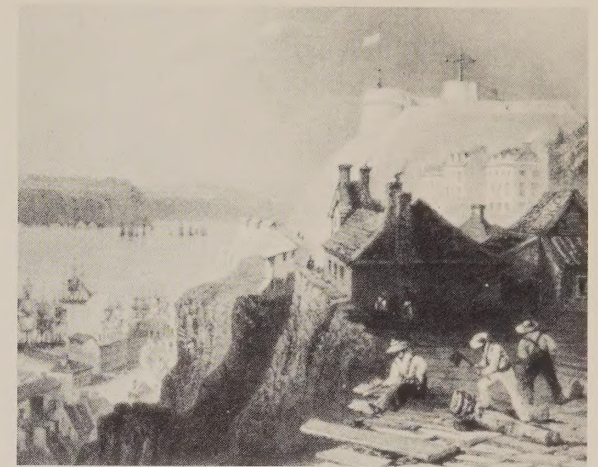
Over in Europe a new breed of explorers and navigators set their sights on sailing west into the uncharted ocean in search of an elusive route to the mythical spice-rich east. A whole 'new world' stood between them and the Pacific and they stopped off to explore.



Among these first explorers were people like John Cabot (Giovanni Caboto) who made trips into the Maritimes around 1497. Mariners from Portugal and Spain probed the region but were interested in settling in warmer climes, the area of Central and South America. Meanwhile, the old European rivals, the French and the English, began their

exploration and colonisation of North America. Leading the way for them were people such as Jacques Cartier, Sir Martin Frobisher and Samuel de Champlain.

Cartier landed at the Gaspé in 1534 and claimed the land for France. He also discovered the St. Lawrence River and was responsible for the name Canada, probably a misnomer for the Indian word Kanata. Frobisher made three voyages starting in 1576 in search of the Northwest Passage.



In 1608 Quebec City was founded by the cartographer Samuel de Champlain.

From 1700 to 1800 further exploration and settlement by the two dominant cultures continued at a rapid pace. This era proved to be critical for Canada, since events here and abroad bore heavily on the shape of things.

The Industrial Revolution in Europe, the American War of Independence, the French Revolution and the Seven Years War between France and England affected Canada. For example, the conflict between France and England spilled over to the colonies in North America and culminated in Canada in the historic battle between the French and the English on the Plains of

Abraham. It ended in defeat for the French forces and with the death of both commanders, Wolfe and Montcalm.

Following all these events, settlers began to pour into British North America as it was now called. Further exploration and trade continued at a quickened pace and Canada, administered from overseas, began to take shape. The need for self determination was not far off.



In 1864, 23 delegates led by Sir John A. Macdonald met in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, to determine the political future of the country. His colleagues included George Etienne Cartier, George Brown, Alexander Galt, Hector Langevin, Messrs. Campbell, MacDougall and Thomas d'Arcy McGee. These men represented the Canadas. From the Maritimes came Charles

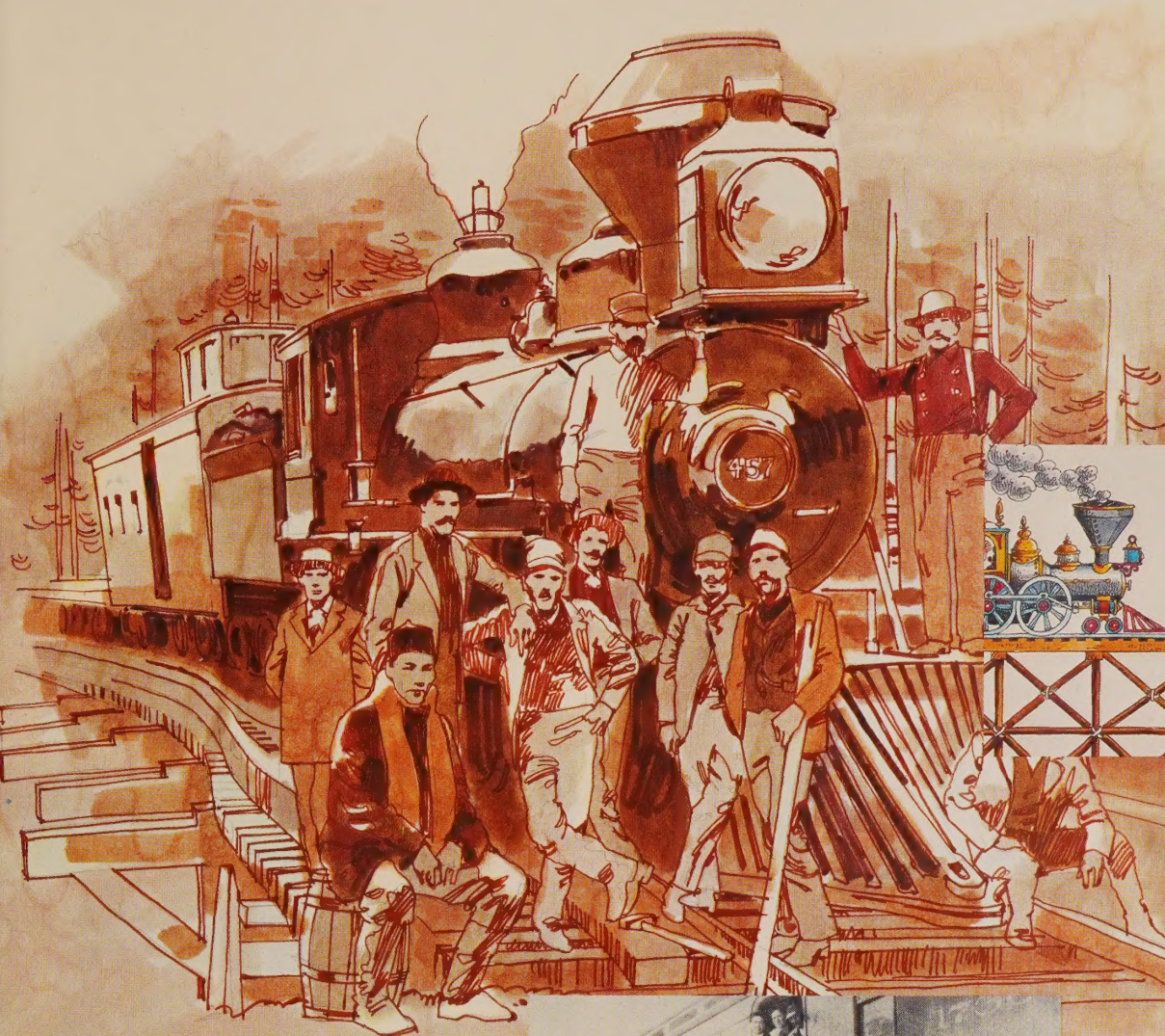
Tupper and Leonard Tilley and, conspicuous by his absence, was Joseph Howe from Nova Scotia, who declined to attend. The way was paved for the Confederation of Canada.

At a two-week conference in Quebec in 1864, the founding Fathers of Confederation framed the Seventy-two Resolutions which formed the basis of the

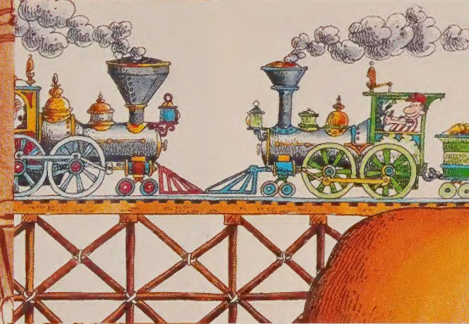
British North America Act. The union soon became a reality.

It was now time to strengthen the geographic links of this vast country. This is where the railway that stretched from east to west was to play a key role. It was also to transport the masses of people who were encouraged to immigrate to Canada and to settle the west.





*Then the railroad snaked across the land
each driven stake part of the master plan.
To unite Canadians from east to west
And bring to each coast the prairies best.*



As a result of the Canadian government's aggressive campaign in Europe to attract new immigrants, thousands came eager to take up the attractive land grants offered in the fertile,

wide-open prairies. The railroad transported the majority of these people.

Many of those who came to Canada around this time first found work on the railroad. Among them were Ukrainians, Chinese, Finns, Italians, Germans and, of course, resident English and French Canadians. Those who remained in the west when the work was completed farmed the land and helped lay the foundation of that region's agricultural and industrial economies.



In spite of this, Canada still needed more people. So the government relaxed the immigration laws and stepped up its advertising campaigns overseas. Consequently, the decade 1904-14 saw the greatest movement of people to Canada ever. This flow ended abruptly with the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914.

With the outbreak of World War I,



many Canadians both new and established answered their country's call to arms. They did their duty and defended the freedom and liberty of this their native or chosen land. When the war in Europe was over, it was back to the farms and the fast-growing industrial centres in the cities.

Little immigration to Canada occurred in the period following the first World War.



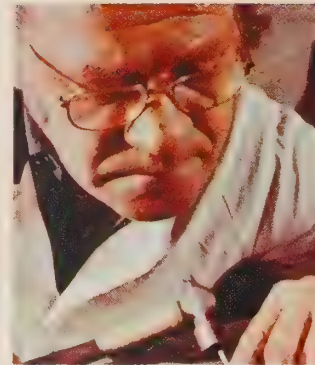
The previous heavy flow of people into the country became a mere trickle. In 1939 the talk of war was again in the air and once more the world was locked in mortal combat.

Immigration increased after the war ended in 1945 and through the period of the fifties, particularly from those European countries which bore the brunt of the

hostilities. The government's post-war immigration policy reflected great concern for displaced persons and many came here to pick up the pieces of their broken lives.

Among this group were many highly skilled and talented people. Their contribution to this country's technological and economic development in the ensuing years proved formidable.





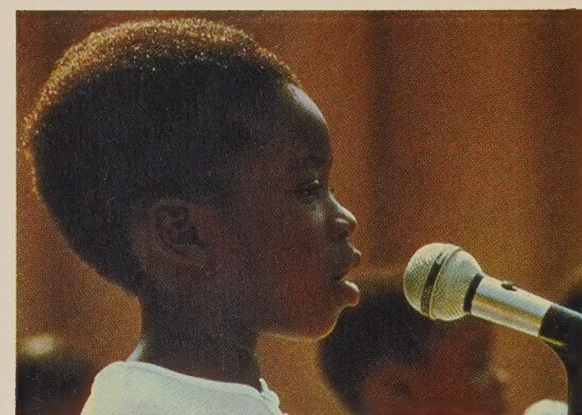
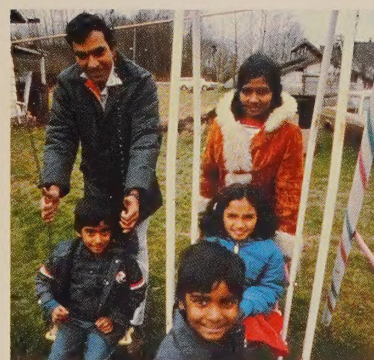
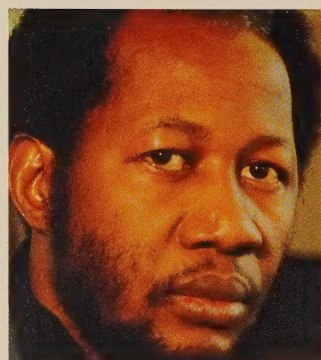
In the sixties the country's economy was vibrant and Canada surged to the fore and staked its claim as a world leader in technological, industrial and resource development. Canada became more attractive to people with special skills or with the desire to acquire these skills.

Around this time many new people

began to arrive from South American countries, the Caribbean, South East Asia and Africa. They came to work, to study and to reside. The complexion of multicultural Canada changed noticeably and visibly.

Today, Canada is a working model of the truly multicultural society and is respected internationally for this. At present approximately 78 different cultural groups

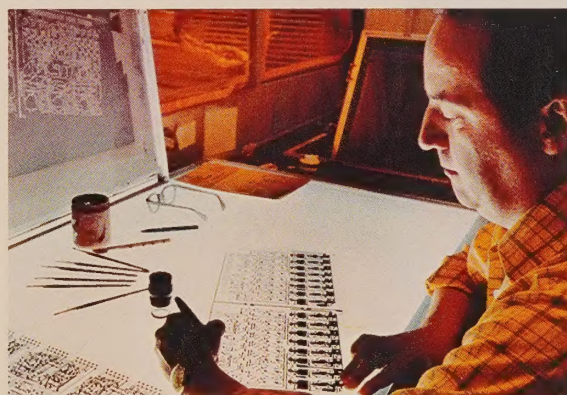




reside here. They make up nearly 30 percent of the population which is neither French nor British in origin.

To ensure harmonious coexistence and mutually beneficial growth in so culturally diverse a population, the federal government in 1971 promulgated the policy of multiculturalism. This policy fundamentally ensures the cultural freedom

and equality of all Canadians and asserts that no ethnocultural group should take precedence over another. Furthermore, through many of its programs and activities, it provides support and encouragement for all cultural groups to share their cultural expressions and values with each other and thus contributes to a more enriched life for all Canadians.



The responsibility for implementing and coordinating all these activities is the mandate of Multiculturalism Canada in Ottawa. This body carries out its work at federal, regional and district levels, ensuring maximum impact and reach to all communities across the country. Over the years, the scope and reach of the program have expanded considerably. It will continue to expand as we strive to ensure understanding of and interest in Multiculturalism.



